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Inductive Studies in the Acts.

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THE PRIMITIVE ERA OF CHRISTIANITY.

AS RECORDED IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

30-63 A. D.

SEC. 23. PAUL'S HEARING BEFORE AGRIPPA.

Acts 25 : 13—26 : 32.

60 A. D.

Cæsarea.

I. STUDY OF THE FACTS.

Let the following subclassification of the material in this section be verified, corrected, or improved :

Par. 1. 25 : 13-22, The Consultation of Festus with Agrippa concerning Paul.

Par. 2. 25 : 23-27, The Examination, Festus' statement of the case.

Par. 3. 26 : 1-23, The Examination, Paul's Defense.

Par. 4. 26 : 24-29, Interruption and Conclusion of the Defense.

Par. 5. 26 : 30-32, Agrippa's Declaration of the Innocence of Paul.

1. Prepare a concise abstract of the material contained in this section, noting the chief facts and recounting them in your own language.

2. Write out a careful paraphrase of Paul's defense before Agrippa (26 : 1-23), reproducing in words of your own the thought and spirit of the apostle.

II. TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION.

1. *Festus' consultation with Agrippa about Paul.*—Which Agrippa was this? Ascertain what is known about him. Over what territory was he the ruler? Investigate the relationships between Agrippa, Bernice, Drusilla and Felix (*cf.* Acts 24 : 24 ; 25 : 3). What was the official relation of the Jewish king Agrippa to the Roman procurator Festus? For what purpose did Agrippa come to Cæsarea in 60 A. D.? Why did Festus wish to consult with him concerning Paul? When did this hearing take place? Consider carefully Festus' presentation

of the case to Agrippa (25: 14-21). Compare with this the previous Acts account of the matter (25: 1-12). Had Festus naturally supposed that Paul was guilty of some crime under the Roman law? What had the trial, however, shown to be the case (*cf.* 25: 18, 19)? What were the religious questions about which the Jews had accused the apostle? Was Festus interested in these, or capable of passing upon them (*cf.* Acts 18: 12-17)? Why did he nevertheless feel a duty regarding the Jewish complaint? For what reason did he propose to Paul that his case be transferred to Jerusalem (25: 20, *cf.* 25: 9)? Did Paul's appeal to Cæsar take his case out of Festus' hands? Of what importance then was Agrippa's opinion about Paul? Had Festus the duty of sending with Paul to Rome a statement of his case, which statement he wished to have as accurate as possible (25: 25, 27)? Investigate this Roman custom of *litteræ dimissoriæ*. Would Agrippa, because he was a Jew (26: 2, 3), be able to advise Festus concerning the religious accusations of the Jews against Paul? Who were assembled with the governor and the king to hear Paul's defense, and why? Who presided at this examination? Picture to yourself, as graphically and accurately as may be, the scene depicted in 25: 23. Consider the preliminary statement of the case made to the assembly by Festus (25: 24-27) containing three points: (1) the accusation of Paul by the Jews, (2) his own judgment of Paul's innocence under Roman law, (3) the particular reason for this examination.

2. *Paul's apology before Agrippa*.—Prepare a careful analysis of this speech of the apostle (26: 1-23), for which the following outline may give suggestion: (1) introduction, vss. 2, 3; (2) his loyalty to strict Judaism in his early religion and career, vss. 4-11; (3) his conversion and its results, by which he was divinely led to accept and to preach the gospel, vss. 12-20; (4) his present position persecuted for advocating Christianity as the true fulfilment of Judaism, vss. 21-23. Was the address interrupted by Festus at this point (25: 23), or had Paul completed what he wished to say? Compare this speech in detail with that given by Paul from the castle steps (Acts 22: 1-21), as to whether both contain in general the same material, have the same point, and present the same argument. What matter is peculiar to this account of chap. 26? How did this defense before Agrippa differ from the apologetic speeches in the two trials before Felix and Festus (24: 10-21; 25: 8). Why the difference? Explain Paul's interpretation of the Messianic hope of Israel (26: 6-8). Consider carefully the meaning of 26: 9, *cf.* 1 Tim. 1: 13; John 16: 2. What two interpretations

are given of 26:10, last clause, and which is to be accepted? Compare this account of Paul's conversion with those in chaps. 9 and 22. In the matter of the commission of Jesus to Paul (26:16-18) explain how it comes that the substance of the divine revelations made to Paul at different and subsequent times (if the other accounts are correct) are here fused together, and put directly into the mouth of Jesus at the Damascus revelation. Compare 26:20 with Gal. 1:18-24. On 26:23 see Isa. 9:2; 42:16; 49:6; 60:2. Describe from 26:22, 23 Paul's attitude as a Christian toward Judaism. Consider the source and the historical trustworthiness of this account of the apostle's speech before Agrippa. What are the chief characteristics of this address?

3. *Paul's concluding words and Agrippa's decision.*—Explain Festus' impatient complaint against Paul, and consider Paul's sincere and informing reply (26:24-26). Were Paul's words incomprehensible to Festus because of the latter's Roman ignorance of the Jewish history and religion, his insusceptibility to high spiritual conceptions and truth, and his dislike of enthusiasm? Was Paul understood by Agrippa, to whom primarily he had been speaking? What was the purpose of Paul's appeal to Agrippa in 26:27? Consider carefully the meaning of Agrippa's reply (26:28), comparing the translations of AV and RV, and judging which interpretation gives the truer view of the situation and of the Jewish king. Who conferred together at the close of this hearing of Paul, and for what purpose? What was the general opinion expressed concerning the case (26:31)? What was Agrippa's decision (26:32) concerning Paul's innocence or guilt relative to the Jewish charges against him? Would Paul's Jewish accusers have considered Agrippa a sufficiently loyal and strict Jew to be qualified to pass an acceptable opinion on Paul's relation to Judaism? If Paul might have been released, had not the appeal to Rome been taken, as Agrippa judged, then was the appeal a mistake on Paul's part? Would Festus' report of the case to the imperial tribunal at Rome be such as quite surely to secure Paul's acquittal?

III. OBSERVATIONS AND TEACHINGS.

For directions as to the work to be done under this head, see the statement at this point in Sec. 20.

LITERATURE.—Upon this section see the commentaries on Acts, especially those of GLOAG, HACKETT, MEYER, and the CAMBRIDGE BIBLE. Also NEANDER, *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, Vol. I, pp. 309-311; FARRAR, *Life and Work of St. Paul*, chap. 42; CONYBEARE AND HOWSON, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chap. 22; STIFLER, *Introduction to the Book of Acts*, sec. xviii; BIBLE DICTIONARY, articles, Agrippa, Appeal, Bernice, Cæsar, Cæsarea, Festus, Paul.

SEC. 24. TRANSFER TO AND IMPRISONMENT AT ROME.

Acts 27 : 1—28 : 31. 60–63 A.D. Cæsarea, Malta, Rome.

I. STUDY OF THE FACTS.

Let the following subclassification of the material in this section be verified, corrected, or improved :

- Par. 1. 27 : 1–8, Beginning of the Voyage to Italy.
- Par. 2. 27 : 9–44, The Shipwreck on the Way.
- Par. 3. 28 : 1–10, Incidents of the Winter Stay in Malta.
- Par. 4. 28 : 11–16, End of the Journey, and Arrival in Rome.
- Par. 5. 28 : 17–22, Paul's First Conference with the Jews at Rome.
- Par. 6. 28 : 23–28, Paul's Second Conference with the Jews at Rome.
- Par. 7. 28 : 30, 31, Paul's Circumstances and Work during the Long Captivity.

1. Prepare an abstract of the material contained in this section.
2. Prepare a concise paraphrase of Paul's addresses to the Jews (28 : 17–28), reproducing as exactly as possible the apostle's thought and spirit.

II. TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION.

1. *The voyage from Cæsarea to Malta.*—In what year, and at what season of the year, was Paul sent a prisoner to Rome? How long was this after his final trial before Festus and his appeal to Cæsar? Who were Paul's Christian companions on this journey to Rome? Who was in charge of Paul as a Roman prisoner? Were there also other prisoners besides himself in the party? How was Paul treated (Acts 27 : 3), and why? Did they go on a ship bound directly for Rome, or had they changes of passage to make en route? How long did they expect the voyage would take? Indicate upon the map and describe the voyage from Cæsarea to Fair Havens. What "Fast" is referred to in 27 : 9, and what time of the year is thereby indicated? Give a brief, accurate account of the tempest and shipwreck which befell the party after leaving Fair Havens, noting especially Paul's relations to the events. On what island were they stranded? Trace on the map the course, and describe the voyage, from Fair Havens to Malta. Consider the hand of God in this voyage of his apostle. Ascertain something of the methods and means of navigation in Paul's time.

Observe the graphic nature, completeness, and technical accuracy of the account of this voyage.

2. *The winter in Malta and journey to Rome.*—Locate upon the map and describe the island of Malta. Describe the inhabitants of the island, as to their nationality, civilization, and language. How was the shipwrecked party received by them? Consider the incident of the viper (28:3-6), Paul's escape, and the quaint superstition of the islanders regarding this. Who was Publius, and what kindness did he extend to Paul and his companions? What miracle did Paul perform at Publius' house, and why did he perform it? Were other miraculous cures wrought at this time (28:9)? How long was the stay in Malta, and when was the voyage to Rome resumed? Indicate upon the map and describe the voyage from Malta to Puteoli. From this point did they probably go by land to Rome? Trace their course on this journey. Who received Paul at Puteoli? How came there to be Christians at that place? Observe that the Christians are called "brethren" (28:14, 15). Describe Paul's meeting with the Roman Christians who came out to welcome him on his approach to that city. Why was their greeting and interest of special importance and joy to Paul? In what year, and at what season of the year, did Paul arrive in Rome?

3. *Paul and the Christians of Rome.*—Why does the New Testament contain no account of the establishment of Christianity in Rome? Is it evident from Rom. 1:13; 15:22-29 that Paul was not its founder? Is it probable also, from the following considerations, that Peter was not the founder either: the entire absence from Acts of any allusion to his presence in Rome; the absence of any mention of his being, or having been there, from the epistles of Paul to the Romans and to the Philippians; and the principle of Paul (Rom. 15:20) not to build on another man's foundation? If not by Peter or Paul, or it would seem by any single individual of prominence, in what way, and when, was the gospel introduced into Rome? Was it perhaps by Jews of Rome who were present in Jerusalem at the Pentecostal outpouring and carried the gospel back with them (Acts 2:10); or by Hellenistic Jewish Christians who were dispersed from Jerusalem at Stephen's death (Acts 8:1; 11:19); or by Gentile Christians who had gone to Rome to live or to preach, from the several cities where Paul had established Christianity? Is it probable, from Rom. 1:7; 16:5, that the Christians in Rome constituted several groups or churches rather than a single organized body? Were there both Jews and

Gentiles in the Christian community or communities in Rome? Consider the passages in the epistle to the Romans which indicate a predominance of the Gentile element (Rom. 1:5, 6, 13-16; 6:19; 10:13, 14; 11:30, 31; 15:1, 8, 9, 15, 16). If mainly Gentile, would the Roman Christians probably hold the Pauline views of Christianity, and why? When, under what circumstances, and why, had Paul written his epistle to the Romans? Why has the Acts said so little about the Christians of Rome?

4. *Paul and the Jews of Rome.*—Did Paul, immediately upon his arrival in Rome, set about to conciliate and convert the Jews of that city? Describe his preliminary effort (28:17-22) to find out what they had heard about him, and to remove all obstacles to his influence and work among them. Consider in detail how his statement was intended to effect this. Compare Paul's statement of his case with the previous Acts account (chaps. 21-26) of the same. Consider carefully the meaning of Acts 28:21, as to the surprising ignorance of the Roman Jews concerning Paul's previous conflicts with the Jews everywhere else. How came the Roman Jews to know so very little (28:22) about the gospel and the Christians when there were so many Christians, some of them converted Jews, in their own city? How large was the attendance at Paul's second conference with the Jews of Rome? Consider how Paul expounded to them at this time the relation of Christianity to Judaism. What was the result of this presentation of the gospel? Why did these Jews as a body reject Paul's teaching? What warning did Paul give them before they went away? Consider Paul's use of the Old Testament passage in 28:26, 27, and compare other New Testament instances of its use (Matt. 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Rom. 11:8). Did Paul then turn with the gospel, as on former occasions elsewhere, to the Gentiles of the city? Observe and explain the omission from the Revised Version of Acts 28:29.

5. *Paul's Roman imprisonment and the Acts record.*—For how long a time, and during what years, was Paul a prisoner at Rome? What was the nature of his captivity (28:16, 30)? Was he allowed to carry on his gospel ministry as he chose? In what ways did he do so? What two chief elements of his teaching are here (28:31) mentioned? Study the epistles, as time permits, which Paul wrote during this period (Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians), for the light which they throw upon his life and work at this time. Why does the Acts narrative end so abruptly with 28:31? Did the trial and its conclu-

sion come at the end of the two years' imprisonment? Did the trial result in condemnation or acquittal, was Paul put to death or released? If the latter, how long a time intervened before his death (in 64 A. D. or later), and what was Paul doing during this period? When and why were Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus written? Consider and explain the incompleteness of the Acts account of Paul's ministry in Rome and the closing years of his career.

III. OBSERVATIONS AND TEACHINGS.

For directions as to the work to be done under this head, see the statement at this point in Sec. 20.

Literature.—Upon this section see the commentaries on Acts, especially those of GLOAG, HACKETT, MEYER, and the CAMBRIDGE BIBLE. Also NEANDER, *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, Vol. I, pp. 311-318; FARRAR, *Life and Work of St. Paul*, chaps. 43-45; CONYBEARE AND HOWSON, *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chaps. 23, 24; STIFLER, *Introduction to the Book of Acts*, secs. xix, xx; RAMSAY, *St. Paul the Traveler*, pp. 283-362; WEIZSÄCKER, *Apostolic Age of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, pp. 115-131; BIBLE DICTIONARY, Articles, Appii Forum, Aristarchus, Claudia (Cauda), Euroclydon (Euraquilo), Fair Havens, Italy, Julius, Luke, Melita (Malta), Paul, Phenice (Phoenix), Publius, Rome, Syracuse, Syrtis, Three Taverns.

There has just been published a *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* by Prof. A. C. McGiffert, Ph.D., D.D., of Union Theological Seminary (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1897, pp. 681, Price \$2.50.) It is safe to say that it is of more value than any other single work on the subject. It is fitted to become the text-book for the thorough, critical study of Primitive Christianity. The student will do well, now at the close of this study of Acts, to review the whole field by the aid of McGiffert's important contribution to the knowledge of this period of history.

REVIEW OF THE PRIMITIVE ERA OF CHRISTIANITY.

The Book of Acts. 30-63 A. D. The Roman Empire.

I. THE ACTS RECORD.

1. Read through the entire book of Acts at one sitting (sixty to ninety minutes), endeavoring to bring the whole history to mind as one unit.
2. Observe the general portions of the book: chaps. 1-7, Christianity in Jerusalem; chaps. 8-15, Christianity in Palestine and Syria; chaps. 16-20, Christianity in Asia and Greece; chaps. 21-28, Paul's Trials and Imprisonment.
3. Review carefully the outline of the history which is contained in the three main divisions, the sections and the paragraphs

(for the divisions and sections see pages 3 and 4, for the paragraphs see under each section). This analysis should be studied until the divisions and sections, with the Acts passages, dates and localities can be written out from memory.

4. Note down the chief characteristics of the book of Acts as a history of the Apostolic Age, as to purpose, style, sources, material included, material excluded, proportionate length of the accounts of the several events, incidents and speeches, the narratives of miracles, the historical trustworthiness in general and in detail.

II. TIME AND ORDER OF EVENTS.

1. Review carefully the Chronological Chart of the Primitive Era of Christianity (page 2), observing whether, in view of your study, you would now change the date of, or rearrange, any of the events (consider the general note at the foot of the chart).
2. Commit to memory now, if you have not previously done so, this Chronological Chart, fixing in mind the time, the consecution, and the relative importance of the events.

III. GEOGRAPHY OF THE HISTORY.

1. Reconsider the fact, and its significance, that the Acts record is framed upon the geographical extension of Christianity.
2. State the five distinct steps of geographical progression of the gospel as set forth in the Acts (see rule column on the extreme left of the Chronological Chart), giving the dates over which each step extends, and a brief description of the circumstances.
3. Sketch a map of the Roman Empire about the Mediterranean Sea, on which pictorially represent the spread of Christianity by five concentric circles about Jerusalem, and mark upon the circumference of each circle the date when the gospel reached this district, and the Acts passage which records the fact.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHRISTIANS.

1. The organization of the church was a natural and gradual growth from an almost unorganized condition to a somewhat complex form of government adapted to the organic life and work of the church. Each element of the organization therefore needs to be considered, first, in its individual aspects, second, in its relational aspects. Consider (1) when each element was intro-

duced into the organization, (2) why it was introduced, (3) what its relation was to the organization into which it came, (4) what its subsequent individual and relational development was.

2. The most important topics which call for this treatment are the following:

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| (1) the original apostles. | (4) Deacons. |
| (2) other church leaders
called apostles. | (5) Prophets. |
| (3) Elders (presbyters,
bishops). | (6) Evangelists. |
| | (7) Pastors. |
| | (8) Teachers. |
| (9) the difference between orders and functions with reference to the foregoing church officers. | |
| (10) absence of any general, comprehensive church officers other than the apostles. | |
| (11) the unity of the local church. | |
| (12) the independence of the local church. | |
| (13) the method of conducting business in church meetings. | |
| (14) the various elements of which the churches were composed. | |
| (15) the method of church discipline. | |
| (16) the conditions of church membership. | |
| (17) variations in the form of church organization in different localities. | |

V. ENVIRONMENT OF THE CHRISTIANS.

1. The environment in which the Christians found themselves constantly underwent modification and change, both by reason of territorial expansion and through the acquisition of adherents to the cause. The environment, therefore, should be viewed separately in each of the three main divisions of the Acts history.
2. The general topics for consideration in each period will be :
 - (1) the particular parts of the world in which Christianity had become established.
 - (2) the chief centers of Christian influence.
 - (3) the relation to the church of the civil power—the Roman government.
 - (4) the relation to the church of the Jewish people in general.

- (5) the relation to the church of the Gentile people in general,
- (6) the relation between Jewish and Gentile Christians.
- (7) the conflict between Christianity and Judaism.
- (8) the conflict between Christianity and Heathenism.

VI. INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHRISTIANS.

Reconsider fully the institutions of the Christian church, each in turn, as regards its origin, significance, manner of observation, modification during the era (if any), and influence. The most important institutions of the church were the following :

- (1) the rite of baptism.
- (2) the rite of the Lord's Supper.
- (3) the Agape.
- (4) Sunday.
- (5) other sacred days.
- (6) creeds.
- (7) public services.
- (8) private religious services.
- (9) places of worship.
- (10) preaching.
- (11) instruction.
- (12) sacred music and hymns.
- (13) prayer.
- (14) charitable contributions.

VII. BELIEF AND TEACHING OF THE CHRISTIANS.

Review carefully the belief and teaching of the primitive Christians, both as respects theology and as respects ethics, as they are recorded in the book of Acts.

1. The theological belief and teaching of the primitive Christians may be reconsidered under the following topics :
 - (1) God.
 - (2) Christ.
 - (3) the Holy Spirit.
 - (4) the spiritual nature of man.
 - (5) sin.
 - (6) the Mosaic law.
 - (7) justification by faith.
 - (8) redemption.
 - (9) the Christian life.
 - (10) the second advent of Christ.
 - (11) the resurrection.
 - (12) the judgment.
 - (13) the consummation of the kingdom.
 - (14) Old Testament Scriptures.
2. The ethical belief and teaching may be reconsidered under the following topics :
 - (1) individual morals.
 - (2) duties to existing government.
 - (3) duties toward social institutions, *e. g.*, slavery.
 - (4) duties of family life.
 - (5) duties toward the weaker brethren.

- (6) Christian virtues.
- (7) Christian graces.

VIII. DAILY LIFE OF THE CHRISTIANS.

Reconsider the characteristics of the life which the Christians lived, both individually and as members of the Christian community. Observe also whether there were material differences in the daily life of the Christians between one and another of the three main divisions of the Acts history. The review may be made on the basis of the following topics :

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| (1) fellowship. | (10) social life. |
| (2) unity. | (11) division of duties. |
| (3) charity. | (12) manners of employment. |
| (4) coöperation. | (13) growth in numbers. |
| (5) property relations. | (14) growth in grace. |
| (6) loyalty to the gospel. | (15) miracle-working. |
| (7) fervency and worshipfulness. | (16) prophesying. |
| | (17) speaking with tongues. |
| (8) zeal and activity for the cause. | (18) interpretation of tongue speaking. |
| (9) individual morals. | |

IX. THE LEADING GOSPEL WORKERS.

Review the Christian leaders of the primitive era, observing the particular division or divisions of the history within which the career of each one fell. Consider them respectively as regards their personal characteristics, their official characteristics, their special missions, their influence upon Christianity. The following workers at least should be so considered, and others may be added as seems fitting :

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| (1) Peter. | (7) Barnabas. |
| (2) James. | (8) Mark. |
| (3) John. | (9) Silas. |
| (4) Stephen. | (10) Timothy. |
| (5) Philip. | (11) Titus. |
| (6) Paul. | (12) Luke. |

X. DIVINE GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTION.

1. Reconsider the continual and loving presence of Christ with his followers, the constant evidence of God's hand in the events

and the experiences of the primitive era of Christianity. Review the providential aspects of the life of Peter, and of the life of Paul; similarly of other prominent Christian workers. Consider the Providence which guided the spread of the gospel throughout the pagan world. May it be said that the career of Christianity, from first to last of the Apostolic Age, through every moment of its existence, was sustained, directed and developed by the divine wisdom, love and power?

2. Reconsider, as fully as time permits, the many lessons for present day Christian life, internal and external, individual and collective, which God has given to us in the events and experiences of the Apostolic Age.